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of interest in the most astounding events which is common in choruses. An earthquake might open the stage at the feet of your average chorister without drawing from him the faintest manifestation of surprise or alarm, provided he happened at the moment to be engaged in the exercise of his vocation. But here the choristers do appear to have some faint inkling of what is passing before and around them, and even condescend semi-occasionally to evince in their movements and looks some interest in the events of the opera. For this the chorus-master deserves hearty thanks, and he has mine.

C. F.

## MUSICAL NOTES.

JOSEFFY has commenced a series of three piano recitals at Steinway Hall. Each is for some charitable purpose. Taking into consideration the celebrity of the performer and the excellence of the objects, the attendance at them ought to be phenomenal; yet at the first the hall was barely one third full. The pianist played with more power than usual, and with all his customary and marvellous finish of execution. I remember no pianist who has equalled him in the matter of safely unravelling the most involute and apparently impossible passages. Liszt, as he stands, is not sufficiently difficult for him; he turns single note passages into sixths and thirds, and invents new cadenzas of fabulous impossibility. But his field is evidently somewhat restricted (not as regards power of execution, for I doubt whether anything has ever been written which he cannot easily master, but) as to conception. He does not appear to understand Schumann at all; and his idea of the first movement of the "Sonata Appassionata" was almost funny. But in Liszt he is thoroughly at home, and in Chopin. His own pieces, three of which he played as a, b, and c, are merely vehicles for exhibiting his phenomenal digital dexterity; they convey no idea, and have not even a foundation of melody. They will, however, set our ambitious pianists at work, practising harder than ever; but, practise as they will, I doubt whether many (I might almost say "any") of them ever achieve more than the power to *scramble* through these mazes of difficulty.

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RUMMEL also projects seven recitals. Here is a pianist who is the exact antipodes of Joseffy. To Joseffy's elaborate finish he opposes overpowering passion and fire; to Joseffy's whispering pianissimo an almost orchestral power and largeness; while in grandeur and variety of conception he far surpasses his rival. Both players have their ardent admirers, and both deserve such attendants. There are many who do not believe that the piano should ever try to be an orchestral or passionate instrument, who think that modern pianism should be only the refinement and extension of that school of which Hummel was a celebrated example; to such Joseffy appeals irresistibly. But there are also those who remember how Rubinstein made the piano rejoice, shout, dream, and weep, and who learned from that master that there was after all some soul in the apparently cold instrument, did one but know how to set to work to find it; and this class admire Rummel. It is not for me to say in which faction lies the greater amount of right; both sides defend their individual causes with many good arguments. The matter is, after all, principally one of temperament; and we are lucky in having here two men, each worthy of reigning in his own peculiar kingdom.

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MISS EMMA ABBOTT and her opera company have given us a two weeks' season. They had an awful orchestra and a tremendous patronage. The prima donna, whose name designates the troupe, has certainly improved very much; she has not become a great operatic artist—nature has denied her certain gifts necessary for that position—but she has improved much more than could have been expected in the year and one or two odd months which have elapsed since her previous appearance in this city. She has still the fault of over-acting; she has as yet no idea of the value and effect of *repose* upon the stage; and she is still too fond of ending every aria with a trill, a cadenza, or a high note, or with all three—repeating her effects until they cease to be effective, instead of judiciously saving them for certain salient points; but in spite of these faults she has improved greatly. Her general execu-

tion is lighter; her trill is a trill and not a slow wobble; and her action, though still excessive, is more justly directed. One of the strongest proofs of her improvement was given by our sapient daily newspaper critics, no doubt unconsciously. It was this: When she sang here before they used her as a butt for their fun and ridicule; this time, although their criticisms were generally adverse (sometimes unreasonably and unjustly so) they were, at least, serious in tone. Whether Miss Abbott has or has not sufficient analytical power to see how great a gain this is, the fact remains that it is really an immense one. Her company is very uneven; good in some respects, astonishingly weak in others, but, on the whole, sufficiently satisfactory. Mr. Stoddard has greatly improved; so has Miss Maurel, although she sadly needs a good method to do justice to her naturally fine voice; while, in Miss Rosewald, Miss Abbott has secured a lady who is an artist. Her execution is phenomenal in its purity, and her acting shows experience, tact, and justly directed study.

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THE Strakosch and Hess English Opera Company is soon to pay us a visit. This company made the fatal mistake of being too big and too expensive; as a natural consequence it has seen some trying times and been through threatening experiences. I will write more at length about it when I have seen it.

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MR. LASAR, the gentleman whose Evangelical Hymnal I dissected last month, has in press a finely selected volume of English church anthems. Though there are some things in the arrangement and editing of the volume which I do not approve, it will be a valuable addition to our scanty church musical literature, for most of the so-called church music published in this country is simply hashed Italian opera, and, as such, thoroughly unfit for use in sacred worship.

CARYL FLORIO.

## Correspondence.

## "STOPPING-OUT" AN UNDERGLAZE BACKGROUND.

Editor of The Art Amateur.

SIR: In laying a flat tint for my background in underglaze painting, I am much troubled by my brush trespassing over the outline of the subject into the design itself. I find it impossible to correct such mistakes without injuring the painting more or less. There is a stopping-out composition of some kind I understand. Please tell me how it is used. UNDERGLAZE.

ANSWER.—After sketching and outlining the design, mix a little chalk with some water and a little gum, and cover the whole pattern with the composition. When it is quite dry, the background color may be laid on over the whole plaque with a large brush in smooth, even strokes, and the dabbler used if the ground is to be quite flat. The plaque must be put away out of the reach of dust until thoroughly dry. Then place it in a basin of water, or a clean wooden or glass bowl, which is safer, and, when the composition is found to be soft, gently wash it while still under water with a piece of cotton wool. Not a particle of the chalk should be allowed to remain on, and if not too strongly mixed with gum there is no difficulty found in removing it. When cleaned off the pattern will show clear and ready for the color it is to receive.

## PAINTING ON LEATHER.

Editor of The Art Amateur.

SIR: Will you inform me in your next issue how to paint on leather with oil paints without the oil spreading, and greatly oblige

A SUBSCRIBER, Brooklyn, N. Y.

ANSWER.—For painting in oil, wash the leather with a very thin mixture of alum and mucilage; when dry paint over it. For painting in water-colors, mix Chinese white with the colors.

## MARCOLINI DRESDEN.

Editor of The Art Amateur.

SIR: I see in THE ART AMATEUR for October, 1880, a notice in the correspondents' column relating to a Dresden cup and saucer, supposed to be the only cup and saucer with the mark of the Marcolini period, which dates from 1796. I have a cup and saucer, dark blue, with a fine painting on each. The Marcolini mark is on both cup and saucer; on the cup is written "Meissen," on the saucer, "Dresden." We suppose it has been in the family nearly a hundred years, and it is in a perfect state of preservation.

M. R. B., Dorchester, Mass.

ANSWER.—If our correspondent will look again at our answer to "S. J. M.," she will see that we made no such statement as that the latter had "the only cup and saucer with the mark of the Marcolini period, which dates from 1796." "S. J. M." wrote, describing a Dresden cup and saucer in his possession,

marked with the blue crossed swords with a star between the handles, and asked its value, adding that he "knew it had been in the family more than a hundred years." Inasmuch as the Marcolini mark, which he describes as being on his piece, was not in use before 1796, we think we were quite safe in assuring him that his cup and saucer is entirely unique. The point of our reply was to show the folly of persons declaring that this or that object in their possession "has been in the family for more than a hundred years," before first finding out for themselves whether the object could possibly have been in existence such a long time ago.

## COLORING OAK BY FUMIGATION.

Editor of The Art Amateur.

SIR: I have heard that there is a very good method of coloring oak by fumigation in such a way as to give the wood an old appearance. Can you tell me what it is? I do not approve at all of imitation antiques; but, opposed as your magazine is to every kind of sham, you will agree with me, I think, that the newness of oak in furniture and dados is very objectionable, and that it is legitimate to tone oak so long as it is not done by staining.

CABINET-MAKER, Detroit, Mich.

ANSWER.—The process is effected by fumigation with liquid ammonia. It is very simple. Get a large packing-case, or, better still, make a room in a corner of the polishing-shop about 9 feet long, 6 feet high, and 3 feet 6 inches wide; pass paper over the joints; let the door close on to a strip of india-rubber tubing; put a pane of glass in the side of the box or house, to enable you to examine the progress of coloring. In putting in your work see that it does not touch anything to hinder the free course of the fumes. Put two or three dishes on the floor to hold the ammonia; about half a pint is sufficient for a case of this size. The ammonia differs in purity, some leaving more residue than others. Small articles can be done by simply covering them with a cloth, having a little spirits in a pot underneath. The color lightens when the wood is polished. It is even and pure, not destroying the transparency of the wood.

## MR. YAYE'S ORIENTAL RUG.

Editor of The Art Amateur.

SIR: In reference to Persian decoration, of which much has been lately said, the fact is everything was permitted by the Persian religion for art representation, and Persian art was an instinct almost before the Mohammedan religion conquered Persia. As for the rug, I think you will find on examination that the silver wire is simply embroidery in chain-stitch, as it does not pass through the ornament, and is certainly not part of the web.

MARY GAY HUMPHREY, 76 Madison Avenue.

[Our correspondent forwards with this communication an interesting article on Oriental embroidery, for which we hope to find room next month.—ED.]

Additional "Correspondence" and "Reviews of New Publications" are crowded out of this number.

## SUPPLEMENT DESIGNS.

PLATE LXXXVIII. is a design for a large plaque—"Goldfinch, Butterfly, and Acacia"—by Camille Piton. The following are Prof. Piton's instructions for painting it: *Ground*: light turquoise-blue on the top and light ivory-yellow at the bottom. *Acacia*: Flowers, yellow for mixing, and sky-blue (light) for the first painting, retouched with gray No. 2 for the second firing. Leaves and stems, apple greens, yellow for mixing, ultramarine for the first painting, retouched with grass green No. 5 and brown No. 108 for the second firing. *Goldfinch*: Beak, yellow for mixing (light). Head, white and black (bluish black). Wings, black and silver-yellow. Body, brown bitume. Tail, black and gray (the black is a mixture of brown-black and blue). *Butterfly*: Yellow (silver-yellow), red (carmine red), white of the china, and black border. The small flowers are white, and the stems and foliage green (deep chrome-green and yellow for mixing). The wrong directions were given for painting the plaque design (PLATE LXXXVII.) in the February extra supplement—"Goldfinch, Butterfly, and Rose" (Ismerie villosa). The ground, the bird, and the butterfly should be done according to the directions given above for PLATE LXXXVIII. The roses are white. First painting: light sky blue and yellow for mixing; for the centre use silver-yellow. Retouch with gray No. 2, the centre with brown No. 3. The foliage should be deep chrome green and yellow for mixing; retouch with grass green No. 5 and brown No. 108. The branches should be gray and brown (neutral gray and brown bitume).

PLATE LXXXIX. is a group of figures representing characters in the new comic opera of "Billie Taylor," drawn for THE ART AMATEUR by Geo. R. Halm. They are especially suitable for outline embroidery or for "etching" on linen.

PLATE XC. is a design for a tea-cosy—"Cherries." Make the stalks of a pinkish green hue and the leaves rather dark green. The cherries may be merely outlined but look best filled in; it is safest to do them flat and not attempt shading. Remember that a round fruit worked in rounds has a more natural shape if you begin at the point where the stalk joins.

PLATE XCI. is a group of designs for borders and panels.

TWO tiles cleverly painted with Japanese designs by Miss May King, of Salem, Mass., have been mounted in ebony for their New York purchaser by Roux & Co., and finished with elaborate silver settings by Dominick & Haff.